

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

28 January 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment  
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM :   
National Intelligence Officer for China-EAP

SUBJECT : East Asia-Pacific Monthly Warning Meeting ☐

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The following items were considered by the Community Representatives:

1. North Korea-South Korea -- Analysts were not aware of any change in order of battle on either side of the DMZ which would suggest hostilities, nor was anything of significance noted in terms of the upgrading of North Korean military capabilities. The "trench" discovered in North Korea north of the Han River estuary was regarded as being a defensive tank barrier; there were indications of possible construction of a defensive nature in the North elsewhere along the DMZ. Further information will be needed to reach a firm judgment as to the purpose of this construction, however. ☐

The main new element addressed was the political appeal by the North to elements in the South to resume talks on reunification, as conveyed in the twelve letters sent to South Korean political figures including the Prime Minister. It was agreed that inclusion of the Prime Minister was a sizeable concession by the North, which has hitherto not openly acknowledged the ROK government as a body with whom it would have to deal. Presumably the North's intent was to capitalize upon the disarray in the South following the 12 December incident (and of course the Park Chong-hee assassination) by creating divisions within political structure, but the new approach was nevertheless significant and would require watching. ☐

The question was raised about a possible Chinese role in the North's new political campaign. Doubts were expressed that the Chinese knew in advance about the twelve letters, although as recently as 22 January the Chinese Military Attache in Washington was emphasizing to

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US contacts that there would be no attack by the North and urging the US to pay attention to what it was doing. Rather, the North Korean overtures, as evidenced by a series of high-level Party and Army meetings from the 18th to the 22nd of December, appeared to be an internal response to the situation in the South with a consequent shift in strategy and possibly in policy. It was assumed that the North would spin out this new political campaign before contemplating a return to force. [ ]

It was reported that the North Koreans were not happy about the Soviet move into Afghanistan, although this position had not been expressed publicly. [ ]

### 3. Indochina

Recalling speculation in December that a major Vietnamese offensive was anticipated against Kampuchean resistance forces operating near the Thai-Kampuchea border, analysts discussed the apparent failure of this offensive to materialize. One point of view held that the offensive was, in fact, presently underway although not on the scale anticipated and with the Kampucheans avoiding combat. Frequency of Vietnamese cross border operations had been stepped up, involving reconnaissance, movement of troops into blocking positions, and implantation of mines. Major clashes had not occurred, though, and the Thai appeared to be avoiding contact with the Vietnamese. [ ]

It was also speculated that toward the end of December, Vietnamese plans had been scaled down and tactics changed due to Hanoi's sensitivity to the pressure of international public opinion. Conceivably Hanoi had decided to live with the current situation on the grounds that the Thai border was sufficiently sealed off to keep Kampuchean resistance at a tolerable level, political trends internationally were in Vietnam's favor, and elsewhere in Kampuchea Hanoi was getting what it wanted in terms of internal control. Vietnamese forces were digging in for a long stay, including planting crops and bringing in NCO's from Vietnam as administrators. [ ]

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It was pointed out that while Hanoi might indeed have decided to live with the situation, it was bearing a very heavy burden as a consequence and following the course which Chinese strategy had hoped for. A Vietnamese decision to launch the kind of operation predicted earlier was not ruled out. Also not ruled out was some Soviet role in influencing the nature and intensity of Vietnamese operations. The assurance on Vietnam's actions given in early January by the Soviet Ambassador to Thailand to Ambassador Ambramowitz were noted. In addition, there was speculation that Vietnam was exercising restraint so as not to involve the US and China in defense of Thailand.

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No particular change in the nature and level of the Soviet military presence in Vietnam was noted, although further coverage of the subject was needed.

No one foresaw any particular part for Sihanouk to play under present circumstances. He was still scheduled to visit the US in February, but his visit to Singapore had apparently been "postponed" indefinitely.

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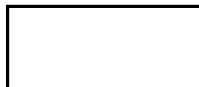
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment

18 January 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Intelligence Officers  
FROM : Chairman, National Intelligence Council  
SUBJECT : Food for Thought

Attached are some questions for possible use in your  
monthly warning meetings next week.



Richard Lehman

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Attachment

This memo can be downgraded to  
UNCLASSIFIED when separated from  
attachment.

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### I. USSR: Fallout from the Intervention in Afghanistan

Soviet Perceptions of US Reactions: Brezhnev's Pravda interview suggests that the Soviets anticipate a sharper and more long-lasting decline in bilateral relations than occurred during the first six months of the Carter administration. If the Soviets have in effect written off prospects for serious dealings with the present administration, will they feel more disposed to respond to US retaliatory measures with countermeasures of their own? Alternatively, if Brezhnev's harsh rhetoric is a short-lived tactical response to the President's statements and actions, will the Soviets seek to contain the damage to bilateral relations?

Brezhnev's Authority: In view of Brezhnev's personal responsibility for foreign policy since early 1973, will events set in motion by the intervention impair Brezhnev's prestige and authority in the CPSU and encourage renewed challenges? Will Afghanistan become a political football in maneuvering in the coming succession contest?

TNF: What effect might post-intervention developments in East-West relations have on Soviet policy on NATO's TNF modernization? Was Moscow's rejection of the NATO offer to negotiate limitations on medium-range missiles in Europe prompted by the post-intervention climate, or was it part of Moscow's original scenario for opposing TNF? Is Soviet rejection aimed primarily at dividing the European allies from the US and exploiting Dutch, Belgian and West German SPD reservations and conditions?

Inter-German Relations: Might the Soviets and East Germans now be inclined to adopt stronger reactions to the TNF decision than they had intended prior to 25-27 December? Soviet and GDR spokesmen have warned that TNF could not only damage GDR-FRG relations but affect the situation in Berlin as well. Might Gen. Yepishev's visit to GSFG on 24-27 December have been related to imminent Soviet countermeasures in Berlin? Embassy Moscow has raised the possibility that the Western reaction to Afghanistan may cause the Soviets to "lash out with a counter reaction of their own" and suggested renewed attempts to terminate Allied patrols in East Berlin "might well be one such step."

Eastern European Nations: Might Soviet actions in Afghanistan cause increased apprehension among the East European leaders? Might their fears of Soviet intervention provide the spark for outbreaks of anti-regime demonstrations, in Poland, for example? How is the equation altered if Tito dies in the near future?

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## II. Afghanistan

Pakistan Border: Do the Soviets believe that the Muslim insurgency cannot be contained or destroyed as long as the Afghan-Pakistani border remains open? How far are the Soviets prepared to go in pressing the Pakistanis to curtail Afghan insurgents' activities in Pakistan?

Military Aid to Pakistan: How will Moscow respond if Pakistan accepts a substantial increase in military assistance from the US and/or China? Will the Soviets play the "Baluchi card" by increasing support for Pathan and Baluchi independence or endorsing Babrak's advocacy of integrating Pakistani Baluchistan into Afghanistan?

## III. Iran

Prospects for Khomeini: Are events moving closer to a catalytic turning point which could abruptly transform the hostage situation and the Khomeini regime's prospects? Do any of the following seem more likely than before?

- a. A showdown between Khomeini and the Revolutionary Council, on the one hand, and the embassy captors, on the other.
- b. A sharp escalation of the minorities' confrontation with Tehran; a declaration of independence by the Kurds or Azarbayjanis.
- c. Strong Iranian reaction to moves by the US and its allies to impose economic sanctions: Moinfar's renewed threat to cut off oil exports to any country which imposes sanctions; moves by the captors to place the hostages on trial as spies.
- d. Bolder Iraqi military probes or provocations, diplomatic initiatives to abrogate the 1975 Algiers accord, or break diplomatic relations.

## IV. Iran-Iraq

Iraq is sharpening pressures on Tehran, and recent events have increased chances of an escalation of mutual hostility. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz has called for the return of "Arab territories" acquired by the Shah in the Algiers accord. If Iran, as expected, rejects Baghdad's demands for revision of the 1975 agreement, will the Iraqis apply even stronger pressures which might trigger a serious clash?

## V. Syria

Initial assessments have concluded that the Baath congress and Assad's changes in the leadership will not be effective in arresting



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his declining political base and checking Sunni extremist attempts to overturn Alawite dominance.

What are the implications of these judgments for Assad's policies in the next three months? Will he sharpen his campaign against Arab "reactionary regimes"?

#### VI. Lebanon

Have the chances of strong Lebanese Christian reaction to the appearance of Iranians in southern Lebanon increased?

What are the Begin government's calculations regarding the pros and cons of "unleashing" Haddad's forces again?"

What would be the likely impact on Syrian and Israeli policies of an escalation of fighting throughout southern Lebanon?

#### VII. The Yemens

The Alert Memorandum of 12 January covered the major warning issues. Additional questions might include:

- Who is now calling the shots in Aden? What is the present status of the traditional cleavage between Ismail's northerners and the southerners?
- What is Iraq's perception of recent events? Might the Iraqis attempt to forestall a PDRY takeover under the guise of a unity agreement by ordering the Baathists in the YAR to oust Salih? Would a Baathist coup attempt provoke PDRY military intervention in the YAR?
- Have chances increased that Salih will order an attack on Saudi forces occupying disputed territory along the undemarcated border?

Soviet Perceptions: How does Moscow assess the present situation? Which faction in Aden are the Soviets backing?

Ismail has long been regarded as a Soviet protege. Is this still valid?

How do the Soviets view their recent arms agreement with Salih in the context of unity negotiations?

Does the Soviet scenario call for jettisoning Salih in favor of backing a unified Yemen under PDRY control?

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Are events building toward an early showdown which could destroy the London agreement?

Nkomo's conciliatory statements on his return to Salisbury suggest an overture to Muzorewa for an election alliance or a coalition government after the elections against ZANU. How will ZANU react if its leaders adopt a "worst case" interpretation of these events?

IX. Vietnam-Kampuchea-China

The major judgments in the Alert Memo of 7 December seem to remain valid. The principal question for judgment is why the Vietnamese offensive in western Kampuchea has been delayed.

- Did the Soviets persuade Hanoi to postpone the offensive because they feared that if it occurred concurrent with their intervention in Afghanistan, it might "overload the international circuits" in a potentially dangerous way by creating an impression of a concerted Soviet and Vietnamese military initiative? The Soviets would be concerned that such an impression might provoke an overreaction in the US, Western Europe, China and Japan.
- Did the Chinese deliver a stiff ultimatum which caused a last-minute change in Hanoi's schedule--a blunt and persuasive threat of Chinese military reaction about which we have no knowledge at this point?

X. South Korea

Have the actions of the group of officers led by Maj. Gen. Chon Tu-hwan since the 12 December coup increased the chances of a confrontation with the NDP and student militants in the next three months?

Are opposition leaders preparing to challenge Chon and/or provoke a confrontation over the timing of constitutional revisions and elections?

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